

## Transportation secretary claims pork wasn't enough

Pat Roberts was on the phone early the day after the Senate passed the new Transportation Bill. It was unusual, a U.S. senator calling the editor at 7:30 a.m. to tell him about a project south of town. It was a big deal, \$5 million to rebuild K-27 near Goodland.

Sen. Roberts was proud of doing something for the voters in his home state. It's a Washington ritual, taking credit for the pork a member of Congress can scrape out of the ol' barrel for the folks back home.

Usually, the senator's staff sends a press release. What gives?

A couple of days later, Kansas Transportation Secretary Deb Miller was confiding in Topeka reporters that Kansas had fared poorly in the transportation bill, which gave Kansas an increase of "only" 19 percent in federal highway money over the next five years.

Other states, she noted, got as much as 30 percent more, and only five states did worse than Kansas. The unspoken blame fell at the feet of Roberts and the other Republicans on the state's congressional delegation.

Ms. Miller is a Democrat, appointed by Gov. Kathleen Sebelius to run the highway department. Were her were completely pure? Might she some day be running for the Senate? Or some other Democrat, even the governor?

Newspapers jumped on the story, distributed statewide by the Associated Press. Editorials followed, accusing Roberts and the others in the Kansas delegation of failing their duty.

When piles of pork were available, they sniffed, why didn't we get more?

The story from Washington is that under the old bill, Kansas got more money from road taxes than it put in. Powerful donor states, including California, demanded a better split of the pie. So Kansas, as Miller put it, got squeezed.

We'll be a donor state by 2007, she says.

Presumably, a better delegation, a more powerful delegation, would have kept us on the plus side.

Miller denies being partisan.

"I don't point the finger at the delegation," she told the AP. "I point the finger at the process in Washington."

Roberts isn't buying that. He thinks most state cabinet officers would be happy with a \$62 million annual increase in federal money. He called Ms. Miller's statements "misleading and disingenuous."

"I view the comments as a partisan attack regarding a program that until now has always been ... bipartisan," he fumed.

The state, he noted, has taken \$800 million from the highway fund to balance its budget and expand aid to schools. Maybe, he said, that's why Ms. Miller is worried about not getting enough federal money to finish the current 10-year highway plan.

It's true, the Legislature has been counting on a big boost in federal money to finish the plan. It's true, they took the money to finance schools.

The senator warned that the highway department might not get such a friendly reception next time they want him to do something.

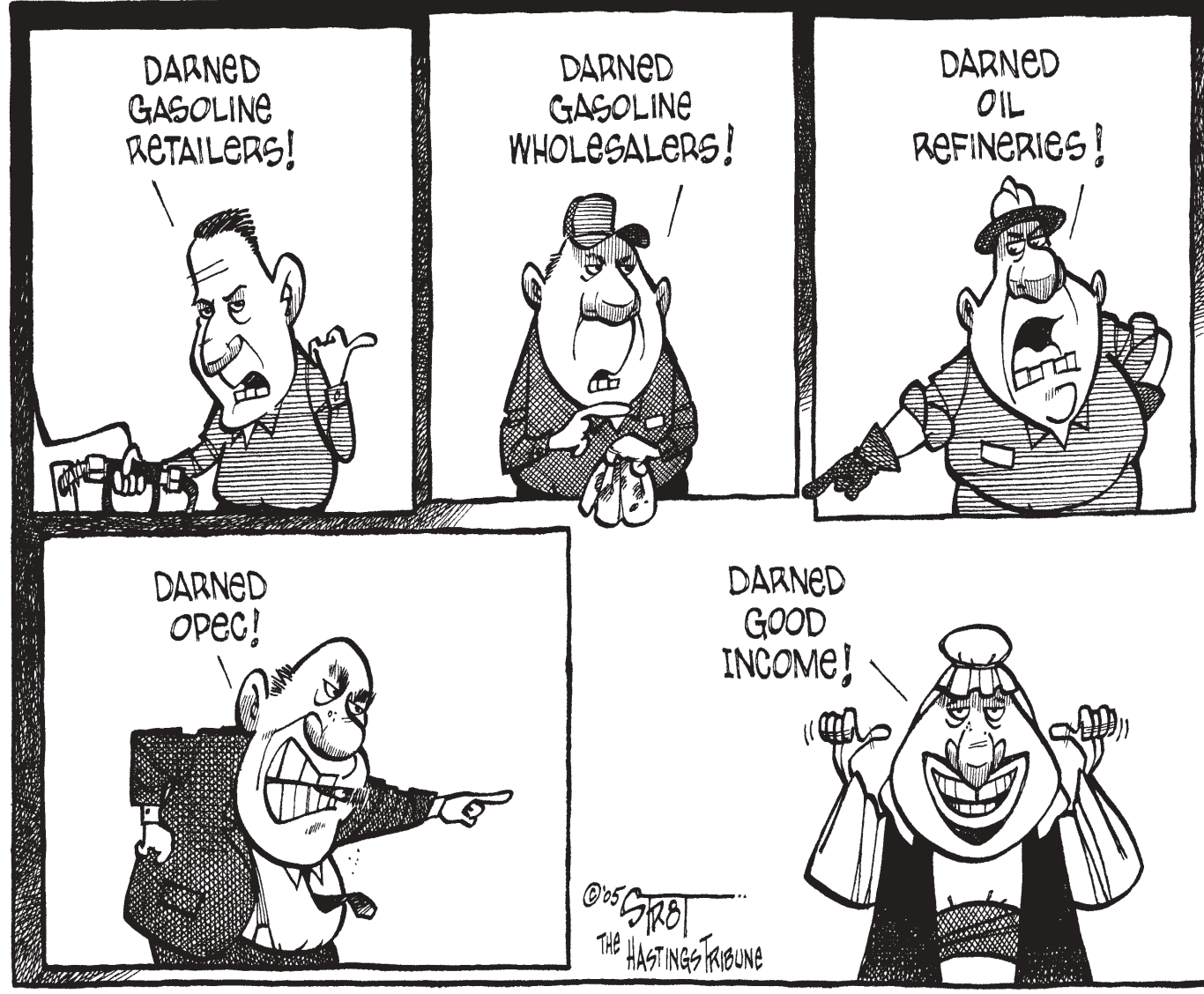
Miller for her part said she'd reply to Mr. Roberts, but not right away.

"I intend to think very carefully about this," she said.

Probably, she'll also be thinking about how to get money to finish all the state's projects.

Maybe she could get someone to sue, charging the state had defaulted on its constitutional duty to build more roads?

It worked for the schools. — Steve Haynes



## Thank God for Kansas' 'dry heat'

It's not the heat. It's the humidity." It's about time western Kansas takes advantage of what Mother Nature has provided us and puts it to some use.

After the recent heat wave I decided to start working on some marketing tools for economic development and tourism for the area.

Two of the daughters were in Boston at the height of the heat wave. Much as we suffered it was nothing compared to what they went through — or so they think because it was so humid.

Kate stayed back east and went on to Virginia for a couple of days. It was even hotter there and just as humid. She got back to Wichita after the cold front went through and stepped out of the airport to 85 degree weather at 5 in the afternoon. She immediately called her friend in Virginia to rub it in. It was 103 degrees there.

Of course, Wichita can be humid, as is a lot of Kansas east of here. So we have an advantage, on the high plains we have "dry heat".

Friends who were in Oklahoma during that "heat wave" complained "Its 101" "Sissies," I replied. "It's 109 here." "Oh man though, the humidity," was

Back Home  
Nancy Hagman



the reply.

Junior's sister was in Branson that week (what was she thinking) and did live through the experience. Some other friends were arriving in Cancun the day they evacuated for the hurricane.

Give me a hot, windy, humidity-free Kansas day anytime. And it's free.

How's that for a come-on, I mean people pay big bucks to go to places there are hurricanes. Vacations in western Kansas would be cheap.

Many years ago we saw Bob Hope in concert at Hays.

One of his little one-liners was "It's so windy in Kansas; there are white caps in the toilet."

Now there is a slogan we could use. How many millions does the state spend

every few years to come up with a new little motto? Here is one for free. Bob Hope probably won't mind.

I can see the license plates now. "Kansas: White caps in the toilets!" Maybe a tasteful little water saving commode screen printed under ABC 123. We could charge extra like they do for vanity plates.

The money could be set aside for a special purpose like a Chapstick fund or hair detangler for long-time residents.

The plate should only be available in counties with average daily wind speeds above a certain amount and low humidity. I bet people would be moving out here in droves just for the plates alone.

Yep, it all adds up we are living in the best place on the planet.

What could be better than lots of hot dry air moving with the force of a blast furnace. I just don't understand why the wind generated power hasn't caught on more. It seems we're never going to run out of it.

Come to think of it maybe I should change the name of my column to go along with the whole package.

How about "Just a whole lot of hot air!"

## Teenagers need to get more sleep

Dear Plain Sense:  
I seem to be in constant conflict with my high school-aged son in regards to him getting to school on time. He doesn't want to get up, nor go to bed at a reasonable time.

Dear Parent:  
Adolescence is a challenge for parents and children, and daily schedules and disagreement about how time is used can be a major conflict.

The physical changes that are a part of adolescence do have an affect on their "internal clock", and often contribute to difficulty in falling asleep when they go to bed.

This makes it more difficult to get up for school or other events, especially for students who have to catch a bus or a ride by 7 or 7:30 a.m.

In addition, children and youth now days have a great deal of stimulation in the evenings such as late after-school activi-

ties and part-time jobs, in addition to television, computers and electronic games, many of which are in their bedrooms.

Researchers say that teens require more than nine hours of sleep each night, yet a great many are getting only six and a half hours or less.

To encourage teens to get enough sleep:  
• Establish a bedtime routine when children are young to help establish good sleep habits that will continue as they get older.

• Decrease late evening stimulation such as television, video games, computers and stereos, as well as foods that include caffeine.

High Plains  
Mental Health  
By Karen D. Beery, LCPC

• Limit the amount of extra time spent in after-school activities or part-time jobs.

• Use light as a cue by making the bedroom dark at night and bright in the morning.

Allow your teen to sleep in on the weekends, but sleeping past noon is too late. Discourage naps in the late afternoon, which make it difficult to fall asleep at a reasonable hour at night.

Be a good role model by establishing and keeping to a good bedtime routine and nighttime hours.

The views expressed here are those of the individual writer and should not be considered a replacement for seeking professional help. Mail questions to: High Plains Mental Health Center, PLAIN SENSE, Consultation and Education Department, 208 East 7th, Hays, Kan. 67601. Questions will be formatted and answered in a manner that insures confidentiality.

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